

I am obliged to Dr. Charles T. Collins for criticising the draft of this contribution. We discussed the English names with Mr. Ben King, of Yale University. The work on which this contribution is based was undertaken while holding a Frank M. Chapman memorial grant from the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

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## Some records of albinism in East Africa

by P. L. Britton

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In the course of field work and museum studies in Kenya during the last twelve months, I have obtained nine records of albinism, involving eight species.

The four specimens in the collection of the National Museum, Nairobi, are the only obvious albinistic examples of c. 25,000 specimens therein. Although I have seen every specimen in that collection I have made no attempt to examine them for minor signs of albinism, but it is unlikely that specimens exhibiting widespread albinism have been overlooked. It is surprising that there are so few albinistic specimens (c. 0.02%), especially as one would expect collectors' interest in aberrant specimens to artificially increase this figure. There are very likely many further specimens exhibiting slight albinism.

The four records involving birds which I have netted are the only examples of albinism in c. 3,000 birds handled. As all birds were examined for active moult it is unlikely that aberrant plumage was overlooked, even if it involved only one or two feathers. Only c. 0.13% showed signs of albinism but the figure is c. 0.8% for *Pycnonotus barbatus*.

### *Numenius arquata* (L.)

A bird was watched on the open shore of Lake Nakuru on 27th June, 1969. It was a very pale, isabelline variety, and probably female, as the bill appeared exceptionally long. It was very similar to the bird photographed by Dr. Pamela Harrison, described in Harrison (1969). Lake Nakuru is one of the Rift Valley soda lakes, but I am certain that the condition described above was not due to "bleaching", as I have seen nothing approaching this condition in any of the birds (including hundreds of waders) which I have handled at this locality.

### *Laniarius fuscus* (Hartlaub)

An otherwise normal bird handled at Kongelai, West Pokot, on 28th October, 1968, had the third secondary on the left wing white apart from the shaft and tip.

*Dicrurus a. adsimilis* (Bechstein)

A wholly white specimen in the National Museum was collected by D. K. S. Grant in the West Usambara Mountains, Tanzania, on 11th March, 1955. The label gives the iris as red, but other soft part colours are not given. The specimen has a yellowish bill, horn coloured legs and feet and yellowish nails. Although these colours may have changed since the time of collection, they are certainly not normal, being unusually pale compared with other specimens.

*Pycnonotus barbatus tricolor* (Hartlaub)

A bird handled at Ng'iya, Nyanza, on 22nd November, 1968, had the second tertial on the right wing white, and a bird handled at Lake Kanyaboli, Nyanza, on 19th July, 1969, had the inside feather on the right side of the tail white, a few white feathers on the crown and a white tip to one tertial covert on the right wing. Both birds were otherwise normal.

*Myrmecocichla aethiops cryptoleuca* Sharpe

A male in the National Museum was collected for A. D. Forbes-Watson at Lugari (near Kitale) on 10th July, 1962. It has no soft part colours recorded on the label, but the bill, legs and feet are apparently normal (blackish). Normal *M. aethiops* are dark brown throughout except for white on the primaries and some white speckling on the forehead, throat and upper breast. It is mainly very dark brown, being darker than any of the thirty-seven normal specimens in the National Museum, and closer in colour to the five female *M. a. arnoti* (Tristram) in the collection. The forehead to upper mantle, whole of the head, and chin to upper breast is mainly pure white with some dark brown feathers. There are some white feathers throughout, but the albinism is more or less symmetrical.

*Turdoides b. hypoleucus* (Cabanis)

A largely off-white female in the National Museum was collected in the Chyulu Hills on 24th April, 1938. The label gives pale yellow iris, black bill and grey-horn feet. The underparts and tail are off-white except for the outer tail feather on the right, which is brown with a very small area of white at the tip, and localised dusky brown smudges on several tail feathers. The upperparts are largely off-white, but there are some brown feathers on the forehead, nape and mantle, and the lores and malar region are brownish. The wings are white except for the third primary, the outer web and a little of the inner web of the second primary, the first primary (apart from the tip) and the first secondary (apart from the tip), which are brown on the right wing, and the fourth, second and first primaries, and the first secondary, which are brown on the left wing. Primaries are numbered from the inside, and secondaries and tertials are numbered from the outside.

*Acrocephalus gracilirostris jacksoni* (Neumann)

I collected a male in breeding condition at Ukwala, Nyanza, on 7th June, 1969. It is normal except for primary 4 and primaries 6-10 on the left wing, which are pure white.

*Camaroptera brachyura griseigula* Sharpe

A male (B 1283) collected by Oliver at Kitale on 18th June, 1929, is in the collection of Capt. H. F. Stoneham, now in the National Museum. The label gives the eye colour as "black with a yellow ring", so the iris was presumably yellow; the legs and feet were flesh and the bill white. It is pure

white where the normal bird is grey or greyish, and the only pigment is canary yellow on the wings and legs. These areas of yellow are green (wings) or rich buff (legs) in normal birds.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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#### Reference:

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## Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature : Opinion 882

In accordance with a decision of the Committee of the Club, and by permission of the International Trust for Zoological Nomenclature, the following Opinion is reproduced from the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature*, vol. 26, part 1, dated 12th May, 1969. This is the only such Opinion concerning birds so far published since 1st January, 1969. Subject to the permission of the Trust, it is proposed to reproduce further Opinions, or publish summaries thereof, in so far as they affect birds.

#### OPINION 882

#### ORNITHOLOGIA BRITANNICA, 1771: VALIDATION OF FOUR SPECIFIC NAMES OF BIRDS

**RULING.**—(1) Under the plenary powers the following specific names, which were published in the work *Ornithologia britannica* in 1771 no doubt by M. Tunstall, a work which has been rejected by the Commission in Direction 38 for all nomenclatorial purposes, are hereby validated;

- (a) *peregrinus* [Tunstall], 1771, as published in the combination *Falco Peregrinus*,
- (b) *aesalon* [Tunstall], 1771, as published in the combination *Falco Aesalon*,
- (c) *rubescens* [Tunstall], 1771, as published in the combination *Alauda Rubescens*,
- (d) *cinerea* [Tunstall], 1771, as published in the combination *Motacilla cinerea*.

(2) The following specific names, validated under (1) above, are hereby placed on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology, with the Name Numbers specified:

- (a) *peregrinus* [Tunstall], 1771, as published in the combination *Falco Peregrinus* (Name No. 2299);
- (b) *aesalon* [Tunstall], 1771, as published in the combination *Falco Aesalon* (Name No. 2300).
- (c) *rubescens* [Tunstall], 1771, as published in the combination *Alauda Rubescens* (Name No. 2301);
- (d) *cinerea* [Tunstall], 1771, as published in the combination *Motacilla cinerea* (Name No. 2302).